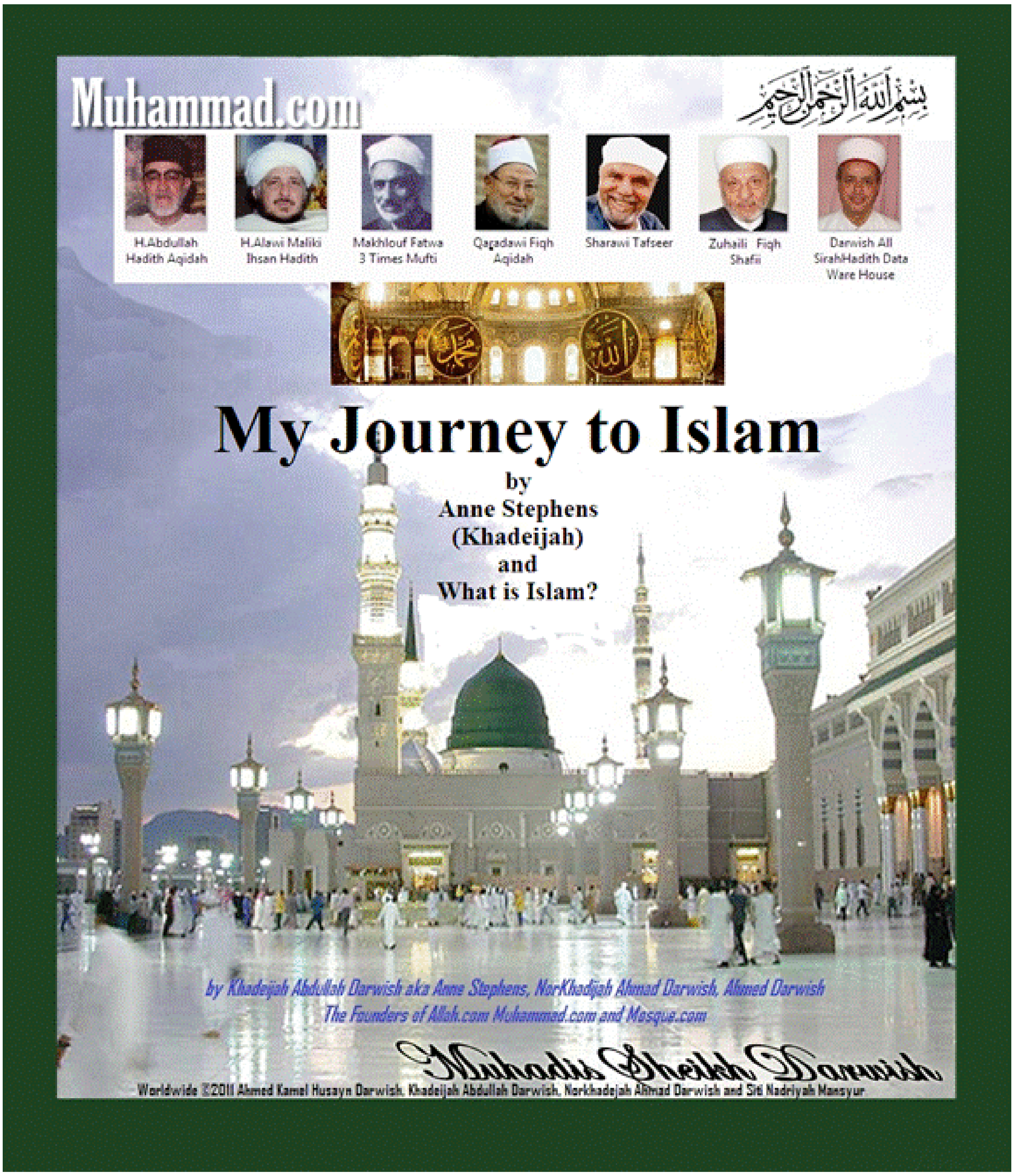
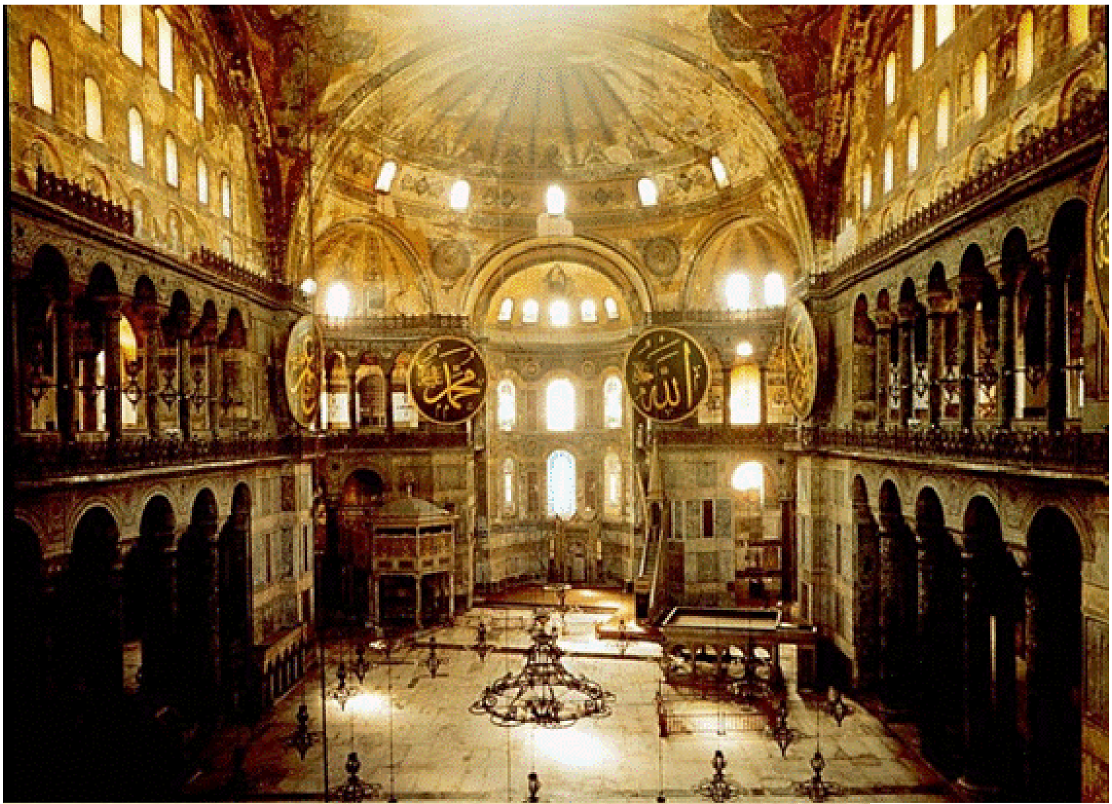

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My Journey to Islam
by
Anne Stephens
(Khadeijah)
and
What is Islam?
by Khadeijah Abdullah Darwish aka Anne Stephens, NorKhadijah Ahmad Darwish, Ahmed Darwish
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Abdullah Ghumari, Muhammad Ali and Ahmed Darwish

My Journey to Islam
by
Anne Stephens

(Khadeijah)

and

What is Islam?
With Azhar approval
by

Shaykh Ahmad Darwish
Founders of Allah.com Muhammad.com and Mosque.com
The authors of over 350 innovative references

The Arabic word 'Allah' is a proper noun of the Creator
In English, the Arabic word 'Islam' means 'Submission' to Allah

My journey to Islam started by the blessing of Allah, at the early age of nine.

It was in 1949, that my parents, who were practicing protestant Christians, decided to send me to a Catholic private school in England which was administered by the nuns of the Sisters of Mercy Order.

My parents sent me to that school for several reasons: first and foremost was that I would receive a better education. Secondly, that I would learn the good manners and code of ethics from the Sisters of Mercy. In fact our school motto was “Manners maketh man”!

From the moment I entered the school I was captivated by all the statues I saw; they were like brightly painted dolls.

I didn’t have many dolls at home as the Second World War had not long ended and they weren’t available in the shops.

Each classroom had a table with a statue, some I was told were of Jesus, some of Mary and the others were of saints - that is Christian Awlia - and around these statues students placed flowers they brought from their gardens at home to adorn them.

It was very attractive to me since I was only a nine year old.

There were only a few protestant children in my class and when it came to the daily religious instruction we were separated from the Catholics by sitting in the back row of the class, but of course we listened in.

In the meantime, my parents made sure I attended my own church's Sunday School not far from our family home every week.

I was around ten or eleven, when Allah caused me to start thinking about religion.

I had noticed that each day around eleven o'clock the school bell would ring and everyone would stand and say the Angelis. The Angelis is a prayer praising Mary said on a rosary (a rosary is similar to Muslim prayer beads).

The Angelis is the biblical quotation of Gabriel when he breathed into Mary that reads, "Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with you, blessed are you amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus".

The Catholics would also supplicate saying, "Holy Mary Mother of … pray for us", this was followed by the lord's prayer which is a prayer Jesus taught.

Not long after I started to notice many of the prayers in the morning assembly were directed to the virgin Mary. I loved Mary, but I didn't think it was right to be praying to her.

Some time after I started to question the validity of saying my prayers to Jesus, who I really loved, but once again I thought it wasn't right to be saying my prayers to him, even though he loved little children. The reason being in my young mind was that it wasn't Jesus who created me, rather I was created by God. I didn't mention my thoughts to my parents as I knew I would get into trouble, so I kept them to myself.

The years passed I would go to the church and feel I was a bad person because I just could not bring myself to say some of the prayers we said in church each Sunday, especially the creed - the creed is the Christian articles of faith (Akidah).

What really troubled me was that in the creed it says *Jesus went to Hell for three days* after he had suffered so much on the cross and after all, Jesus told us that Hell was a terrible place created especially for the punishment of sinners.

Remember, in my young mind I was still under the impression that God was the father – may Allah forgive me - and my mind prompted me to think that if I was a mother or father I could not let my son go to Hell. After all, the Christian religion strongly preaches that God, "the father", is the God of Love, and what parent who is all powerful and loving would let that happen!

I also thought to myself that if Jesus in all his purity and proximity to God went to Hell for three days, what chance did I have to escape from it with all my sins! The answer was a resounding "none".

Then one day at my church's Sunday School, I overheard a teacher describing the parting of the sea by Moses to a new teacher. The teacher told the newcomer that they did not teach the parting of the sea was a miracle but instead a natural occurrence! I could not hold myself back, and said much to the annoyance and shunning of the teacher, "But God can do anything!" There was no reply, just a patronizing look as if to say, "she's too young to understand."

Anyway, I had now reached my early teenage years and started to look into other branches of Christianity, but none satisfied my heart.

Yes, I loved Jesus and all the stories I had heard about him, but still I could not bring myself rate him as high as God who created me but I remained in my ignorance and did not question his relationship to the Creator.

It bothered me a great deal that the creed said - and the statement was very clear - that Jesus went to Hell and remained there for three days so that I decided to write to the Arch Bishop of Canterbury - he's the same rank as the Pope of Rome for English protestants.

A while later I received a reply from his Senior Chaplain with the title "Prebendary" saying that as the Arch Bishop was away in Africa and he was replying on his behalf.

Lambeth Palace, SE1 7JU.

The word 'Hell' in the Creed does not mean the place of torment but the place of departed spirits. In fact what the Creed says is that Jesus experienced death as we do.

Yours sincerely,

Prebendary Cleverley Ford
Senior Chaplain to the Archbishop

The reply was even more confusing.

He wrote that "Hell" was just a place for departed souls, and does not mean a place of torment and that what the creed says is that Jesus experienced death as we do. If that is the case, why did Jesus warn us about going to Hell if there is nothing to fear? I was even more bewildered.

In light of the reply to my letter, I decided to look up the words "died" and "Hell". Webster's dictionary defines the word "died" as "the end of life, to pass out of existence", whereas in Webster's larger dictionary it is defined, "in theology, separation or alienation of the soul from God; a being under the domination of sin, and destitute of grace or divine life."

As for the word “Hell”, the dictionary read, “the realm of the devil in which the damned suffer everlasting punishment, or a place, or state of torment.” By the way I still have the letter.

I was now twenty-two years old and went to a conference in London, and during my spare time, I took the opportunity to go to music record shops, as classical music was a great passion of mine, and in particular the music of the Russian composer Rachmaninoff.

There weren’t any cassettes, CD’s or DVD’s in those day, music was recorded on large circular plastic disks ‘records’ and packaged in a ‘sleeve’ – which is a kind of protective envelope – with a picture printed on the front which often relates to the music inside.

Much to my delight, as I browsed through the records I found a collector’s item, a Rachmaninov symphony, not one of his piano concertos, but a symphony! I didn’t have time to test listen to the record in the shop so I just paid for it, packed it in my bag ready to leave for home the following morning.

It wasn’t until the following Saturday that I had a chance to play the record. I put the record on and settled down to listen and in doing so I paid attention for the first time to the picture on the cover of the record.

The picture that took the shape of an arch inside a very high building struck me immediately. In the top right and left hand corners on the picture were two disks with writing I had never seen before, and I started to cry, but I did not know why, however, I did know there was something spiritual about them. I cried so much that when a friend came to visit me that afternoon they asked why my eyes were so puffy, but that was my secret.

I tried to find out what the writing on the disks said, but no luck, and I didn’t have a clue which language it was; I thought perhaps it was Chinese!

Then again, there was another strange thing, it was usual to have information printed on the record that says where the picture was taken – but there was nothing.

At that time, there weren’t many Muslims in England, and there certainly weren’t any in my area or even a mosque. Every time I looked at the record

cover I still experienced the same very spiritual feeling – but what to do! There was no one to help me.
Some years later, I went to work in the United Arab Emirates where I saw the same strange calligraphy I had seen on the two disks all those years ago and when I asked, I was told they read “Allah” and “Muhammad”!

I had never been exposed to either Islam or Muslims at that time and I kept asking Muslims at work in Dubai about Islam, but the answers I got were far from satisfactory – their real interest was in dating western girls!

The best answer I received was “Jesus is the same as Muhammad”, I had never questioned the status of Jesus and wondered what was meant by “Jesus is the same as Muhammad”.

I went to bookstores and libraries to see if I could find out more about Islam, but the books were written in poor Indian/Pakistani English spoken during the previous century. What a headache that was, they were often incomprehensible and I remained in my ignorance.

What I did notice in Dubai, and it made a great impression on me, was that when the time for prayer came I would see the poor laborers who were tending the plants and trees in the middle of the road, stop and wash themselves with their watering hose and then pray, as the owners of status symbol cars passed by. It was as Heraclius, Emperor of Rome said, “The followers of the prophets are the poor.” (See our book, Heraclius, Emperor of Rome Supported Prophet Muhammad)

I also noticed that the majority of people who went to pray in the mosque were men, which is the opposite to England where the majority are the women who go to church.

I reconciled myself that Islam had gone the same way as Christianity, that there had been something once, but now only fragments remained. It seemed as if Muslims had, like the Christians, exchanged spiritual values for material values, however the Christians remained very charitable.

I also observed that many Muslims were attracted to western practices and culture and as a result they failed to appreciate and realize the value of their own pure heritage as they amassed wealth and possessions. Greed had set it. It was only in later life when I read the hadith of the Prophet, praise and

peace be upon him, that warned, “I do not fear your reversion to idolatry, rather I fear you will compete with one another for worldly gain” was in the process of being fulfilled.

The English newspaper “Al Khaleej” published by the Kaladari family was delivered each morning to my home.

One day by the blessing and mercy of Allah, I found a little booklet, about twenty pages inside called “What is Islam?” My heart jumped as I started to read it; the book was in good English – what a change! Then I realized I was going to be late for work, so I put it inside my handbag, and caught a taxi.

That day there was little or no work to do, it was very quiet, and my boss was away, so I had the chance to read the little book and read it from cover to cover. I was so excited; it was answering many of the questions I had asked but had not received the answers I was looking for.

I looked on the cover of the book for the name and address of the organization that had sent it as naturally, I wanted to speak with them, but once again – no information, just the name of the author “Ahmad Darwish”. What to do!

I could not let this opportunity fall through my hands, so I phoned the newspaper and told them I wanted to contact the organization who arranged for the booklet to be delivered. I was put on hold, passed from one office to another, and eventually, Al Hamdulillah, someone gave me a telephone number. I phoned the number, and it turned out to be a kindergarten school that offered religious education to Muslim ladies after school hours. Much to my delight, the school told me they met on a Thursday, so the following Thursday, Al Hamdulillah, I took my first step to Islam.

At the school, I was made very welcome and met the author of the little book who was giving lessons. He taught me a lot about Islam and told me the Arabic Koran had never, ever been altered and that the first manuscripts still exist! That really grabbed my attention.

Then he told me something I had never heard before which really shook me. He told me that the actual disciples of Jesus did not write the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the New Testament, but that they were people who came sometime after Jesus but had the same name! I had to look

into this, if what he said was correct, then that would explain why their stories didn’t always match up with one another.

I went home and looked in the telephone directory for the number of a church in Dubai. There wasn’t one belonging to the Church of England, but there was one belonging to the Catholic church. I phoned and inquired about the four Gospels, and yes, the priest confirmed that they weren’t written by the actual disciples of Jesus but rather “inspired” people who happened to have the same name as the disciples! Wow, that’s one of the best kept secrets of the Christian religion, even my father didn’t know about that.

At the school I met the grandmother of the Kaladari newspaper owner who attended the weekly classes and discovered it was through her persuasive kindness that the little booklet had been inserted in her grandson’s newspaper. May Allah reward her and the author of the little book.

I looked forward to Thursdays and not long after, under the guidance of Ahmad Darwish I embraced Islam. It was like a big jigsaw puzzle coming together, I had by the blessing of Allah found what I had been looking for, for so many years and I felt I had come home Al Hamdulillah!

By the way, one day as I was in the souk, I saw the same picture I had seen on the record cover all those years ago and discovered the picture was the interior of the Blue Mosque in Turkey!

As I was writing this a thought just struck me about the name of the composer “Rachmaninoff”. I knew that “inoff is a Russian word for “son of”, but before now I had not thought of the first part of his name “Rachman”, could it be Rahman? So I wondered whether perhaps Rachmaninoff was a Muslim – Allah knows - it’s just a thought of mine.



Now, many years later, I live in Shah Alam, Malaysia where the late Sultan, Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah built a splendid, truly imposing mosque and the mosque is – smile - called the “Blue Mosque”. The mosque is the largest mosque in the far-east and it is heartwarming to know that Sultan Salahuddin’s son is very active in religious affairs and provides many classes for all ages in the mosque.

Al Hamdulillah, Allah guided me to Islam.

I have just read through my little story, and thought that maybe it could be taken as being self-promoting, but I assure you this was not my intention, it is an attempt to tell of the Favor of Allah to me, a person who was completely lost and found her way home by the Mercy of Allah.

By the way, Shaykh Ahmad Darwish asked me to marry him; he wanted an English speaking wife to help him in his preaching activities and the translation of Islamic material. As for myself, I wanted someone who could teach me more about Islam, so we were married.

Our first major work was the translation of the meaning of the Koran in which Shaykh Ahmad painstakingly researched the meaning and usage of

words, and the second was the seerah which I titled, “The Journey of a Lifetime with Prophet Muhammad” that took many years to research and develop.

As I mentioned before, at that time there was very little Islamic literature written in good English, and I was worried about our children as there were no nice stories available to attract them, and that, in my opinion, was a dangerous situation. I remembered once hearing a Catholic priest say that if you catch the children at an early age, they will remain attracted to religion. So in between working on major Islamic references I started to write short stories for our children. (A partial list of our work can be found at the end of this booklet).

I am sure you will enjoy reading “What is Islam” which follows. Perhaps you might like to pass it on to a friend or neighbor. As you know, anyone who guides another to Islam receives a tremendous reward in the Everlasting Life!

May Allah bless us and protect us.
Salaams
Anne Khadeijah



The Arabic word 'Allah' is a proper noun of the Creator
In English, the Arabic word 'Islam' means 'Submission' to Allah
www.Allah.com www.Muhammad.com www.Mosque.com
In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful

What is Islam
Ahmad Darwish

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
THE MERCIFUL, THE MOST MERCIFUL

FROM MUHAMMAD ﷺ THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH
TO HERACLIUS: THE GREATEST OF ROMANS.

Peace be upon those who follow Divine Guidance. I therefore invite you to embrace Islam, surrender to Allah to be in peace. Allah will doubly reward you, but if you turn away the sin of the 'Arisiyin (those who he governed) will rest upon you.

"'People of the Book, (Jews and Christians), let us come to a common word between us and you that we will worship none except Allah, that we will associate none with Him, and that none of us take others for lords besides Allah.' If they turn away, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims (those have surrendered to Him)'." Koran 3:64

The Prophets ﷺ of Allah mentioned in the Holy Koran
Muhammad, Jesus, John, Zachariah, Elisha, Ellias, Jonah, Ezekiel, Job, Solomon, David, Aaron, Moses, Shuaib, Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, Ishmael, Lot, Abraham, Salih, Hood, Idris, Noah and Adam

To the reader:

First of all we would like to thank you for taking the time gain a better understanding of Islam which is the religion of absolute submission to the Creator of mankind and prophets alike, Allah.

We sincerely hope you will benefit from this authentic introduction to Islam, and that it may deepen your knowledge and increase your interest.

People such as yourself with inquiring minds invariably have families and friends of similar inclination, and we invite you to give them a copy of this booklet.

The Mosque of the Internet team

Welcome!

Everything seems to be turned upside down these days. Crazy things are happening all over the world, we are fed with partial information, misinformation and so on, that many of us find ourselves in a state of complex ignorance, that is we are ignorant that we are ignorant, and do not know the whole truth through no fault of our own, and we form our opinions accordingly.

This brief booklet presents Islam in its true form and we stress that it is not that of the fanatical Saudi Wahabi cult, responsible, since its inception for terrorism and the murder of many innocent people as well as Muslims. Their actions are totally against the principals of Islam and Islam rejects and condemns their actions.

Islam is the religion of peace, brotherhood, and tolerant co-existence among all mankind, not just amongst its followers.

The foremost principal of Islam is the belief in the Oneness of God, the Creator of all, who has no partners, who is the sender of the Prophets to whom he gave His guidance, who is the sender of the last prophet, Prophet Muhammad who was sent for all mankind and not to one nation as were the missions of previous prophets. Praise and peace be upon all the prophets of Allah.

Many people have the inherent desire for guidance. However, in this complicated, fast moving technological society, the pace of life is so consuming that one is soon distracted from his/her search. New religions are born almost every day only to fade into oblivion soon after.

Many of us try to do good, but how many times has it turned out to be the opposite? We have all heard the phrase, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. So what are we to do? Without the correct guidance we are going to keep falling into the same error time and time again.

Islam addresses each and every aspect of our life from conception to death. It is a complete religion, both spiritually and materialistically that shows us the right path to take, and Allah, the Arabic pronoun for God, confirms this in the opening verses of chapter two in His Holy Book, the Koran, “That is the (Holy) Book, where there is no doubt. It is a guidance for the cautious.”

Muslims are no in doubt that the Arabic Koran recited today is the same as it was when it was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad because Allah in His Mercy promises in the Koran to protect this, His Final Word from alteration. The Koran contains guidance for every age up until the end of time and contains miraculous signs that await discovery in the appropriate centuries. One such sign that awaited discovery was the developmental stages of the fetus in the womb. This process only became known to physicians recently, many centuries after the revelation of the Koran, and it is impossible that it would have been known at the time of the sending down of the Holy Koran.

The Koran found in today's book stores can be compared to the first copies ever to be written down, such as the one in Bukhara, USSR, there is no difference between them. This in itself is a miracle as rabbis and priest alike admit their books have been, for one reason or another, subjected to alteration and/or parts deleted over the passage of time. Allah refers to the alterations in the Koran saying: "Some Jews tampered with the words (altering) their places saying: 'We heard and we disobey,' and 'hear, without hearing,' and 'observe us' twisting with their tongues traducing religion …." Koran 4:46

The Gospel given to Prophet Jesus by Allah is no longer found in the New Testament, what remains, for the most part, are the teachings of Paul who was not a prophet.

Islam is not a new religion. It is the completion of teachings of Prophets Abraham, Moses and Jesus, all of whom preached that God is One and has no partners. It is tolerant and respectful of all other heavenly religions and their followers who share the belief in the One and only God. The Holy Koran teaches: "There is no compulsion in religion. Righteousness is now distinct from error. He who disbelieves in the idol and believes in Allah has grasped the firmest tie that will never break, Allah is Hearing, Knowing." Koran 2:256

THE MEANING OF ISLAM

It is false to call Islam Muhammadanism, as has been done so frequently in the West. We have already pointed out that Muslims believe that Islam is the eternal message which Allah sent to all prophets, peace be upon them, from

the dawn of mankind, and not a new belief which began with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (praise and peace be upon him).

Muslims call their religion Islam, and the Arabic word “Islam” implies the attainment of peace through submission to Allah. The word “Muslim” is an adjective derived from the noun Islam, and implies one who has peace within himself from his submission to Allah.

Muslims believe in the One, Eternal God, who created the heavens and the earth and all that exists. In Arabic, God is called Allah.

There is absolutely no difference between Allah and the God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Muslims do not believe that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the only prophet; rather they believe that he was the last of the prophets ﷺ of the Old and New Testament. The Holy Koran is the revealed and sacred scripture of Islam, and it teaches: "Say (O Muslims), ‘We believe in Allah and that which is sent down to us, and in what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes; to Moses and Jesus and the prophets of their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them, and to Him we are submissive (Muslims.)” Koran 2:136.

SOME BASIC BELIEFS OF ISLAM

The most fundamental concept of Islam and the fountainhead of all its other principles and practices is the Oneness of Allah. Islam is monotheism in its purest form, and the logic of pure monotheism is the thread that runs through the entire fabric of the Islamic way of life.

Islam teaches a fundamental difference between Allah, the Creator and that which He has created. The sky, the moon, the stars, the harmony and perfection of the natural world, the grace and beauty of the human body and the excellence of the human mind, the alternation of day and night, the change of the seasons, and the mystery of life and death all point to something beyond, greater than themselves.

To the believer these are all signs of Allah. Islam teaches that Allah is not to be likened to anything that He has created. He is All–Powerful, All-Knowing; He is beyond any imperfection, and is the fulfillment of all perfection. He is not a substance, nor is He like any of His creatures. Allah is

not a far away and distant God, nor is He unapproachable ideal. He is All-Kind, All Merciful, and the Turner of hearts.

Islam teaches that Allah is eternal. He was not Himself born, nor has He fathered a son or a daughter. Islam rejects the concept of the incarnation of Allah, which is found in Hinduism, Christianity, and other religions, and believes that the concept of incarnation limits the concept of Allah and destroys the believer's conviction of the activeness and perfection of Allah.

The Koran describes Allah being perfect and active: "Allah, there is no god except He. The Living, the Everlasting. Neither dozing nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is he that shall intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what will be before their hands and what was behind them, and they do not comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He willed. His Seat embraces the heavens and earth, and the preserving of them does not weary Him. He is the High, the Great." Koran 2:255.

Islam rejects the notion that Jesus, peace be upon him, was the son of God. Rather it honors and respects him as one of the great messengers and prophets of Allah sent to the children of Israel. Islam rejects the Pauline concept of trinity and considers it a contradiction of pure monotheism. It also rejects the argument of some Christians that God made Himself incarnate in Jesus, peace be upon him, so that God could be known by men, and also rejects the argument that Jesus, peace be upon him, died on the cross for mankind's sins.

To begin with, Islam believes that man can come to know Allah and feel close to Him by means of proper prayer, fasting, charity, pilgrimage, and righteous deeds. The very practice of Islam is meant to purify the believer's soul and to bring him/her closer to Allah. With regard to Jesus dying for our sins, Islam teaches that no human being can bear the burden of another's responsibility.

Allah is very aware of our human weaknesses and imperfection. He does not condemn us because we are imperfect; rather He guides us to self-perfection and He forgives us and showers His Mercy upon us when we fail and then sincerely ask His forgiveness.

Muslims believe in the Divine origin of the Bible although Muslims doubt the historical authenticity of some parts of the Old and New Testaments and do not believe them to be exact representations of what Allah originally revealed.

The Koran upheld this view of the text of the Old and New Testaments hundreds of years ago, and in recent years, this view has been upheld by textual studies of biblical scholars. Muslims believe in the Angels of Allah, and His Prophets, peace be upon them. They believe in the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world; they believe in the coming of the Day of Judgement and eternal life in Paradise or Hell.

Although Muslims believe that Allah is All-Powerful and maintains complete control over His creation, they also believe that Allah has created man with free will and the ability to choose and act, and that Allah is just in making man morally responsible for what does during his/her lifetime. It is false to say that Islam teaches its followers to resign meekly and passively to their fate or destiny. Rather, Islam challenges the believer to fight against wrong and oppression and to strive for the establishment of righteousness and justice.

FAITH IN ACTION

Faith without action is a dead letter. Islam teaches us that faith by itself is not enough until it is transformed into action.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said; "Faith does not depend on raising hopes, but it is something which is firmly established in the heart and testified to by action. Indeed, there are people who have been deceived by their hopes, so that they finally leave this world without merit. They used to say, 'We have good expectations from Allah.' Yet they only deceived themselves. For had they truly placed good expectations in Allah, they would have excelled in good deeds."

Each Muslim is taught that he/she is personally responsible for his/her own actions. Islam teaches that every individual must carry the responsibility of his/her own actions and that no one can carry that burden for them.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

Islam teaches that the woman is not inherently inferior to man; rather the man and the woman are of similar nature. They both are equal in intellectual and spiritual capacity. Furthermore, they are both equally responsible for their deeds before Allah.

It is also true that Islam regards the woman as having a primary role to play in the constitution and running of the family. Such is the importance of the role of motherhood that Prophet Muhammad informed us that Paradise lies under the feet of the mother, in other words one must respect, honor and be good to one's mother. If you visit a Muslim home it will become very noticeable how the entire family pivots around her and it is extremely rare in Muslim countries to hear of a mother or father being farmed off into a nursing home when they are elderly.

Islam places great emphasis on the role of the Muslim woman as a wife and particularly as a mother, and Muslims are often of the opinion that the best position for the woman is in the home with her children and family. However, the Muslim woman is not prohibited from leaving her home to pursue education, a career, or other worthwhile and constructive goals that profit not only her but society as well. The Koran establishes the spiritual equality and mutual responsibility of man and woman in verses such as the following: "But whosoever does good works of righteousness, whether they be a believing male or female, shall enter Paradise, and not be wronged a pit mark of a date stone." Koran 4:124.

"And indeed their Lord answered them, 'I do not waste the labor of any that labors among you, male or female, you are from each other." Koran 3:195.

The relationship of the Muslim husband to his wife is not that of master to slave. Rather the entire responsibility of economic support is placed on the shoulders of the husband alone. He cannot demand of his wife that she also become economically productive to support the family, although she is able to do this if she desires.

The Koran explains this responsibility of men to women in the following verse: "Men are the maintainers of women for that Allah has preferred in bounty one of them over the other, and for that they have spent their wealth. Righteous women are obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah has guarded." Koran 4:34.

The important point that should be made is that the religion of Islam has great respect for the woman. It does not teach that she is without a soul or that she is the root of all evil, neither does it define a woman as being inferior and must be kept in seclusion and subjugation.

We are often asked why Muslim women wear black and are completely veiled. This practice is nationalistic and not from Islam. The attire of a Muslim woman is that of modesty, where her figure is not apparent to outsiders, not of veiling, however a scarf is a necessity. In this day and age in particular where rape is a common occurrence in the west she finds modest clothing to be a protection from unwarranted advances by the opposite sex. Also, modest clothing has recently been advocated by cancer physicians as a form of protection against the sun’s harmful rays that cause melanoma, skin cancer.
.
Both Judaism and Christianity preach that the fall of Adam from the Garden of Eden was the fault of Eve and as such women are to blame. This is not the teaching of Islam, the Koran directs all the responsibility to Adam himself, while adding that Allah turned to Adam in mercy and forgave him his sin. Therefore, Adam's sin stops with Adam himself, and Allah does not hold mankind responsible for the sin of Adam and rejects the concept of original sin.

We cannot deny that the condition of women has at times been regrettable in the Muslim world, but the same can also be said of the rest of the world at large. We do not wish to justify these circumstances, but only to make the point that they did not originate from the teachings of Islam itself. Rather, they are the results of short sightedness, ignorance and human failure. Those believing women who were unjustly treated will be recompensed for their patience in the Hereafter because Allah is Just and does not love injustice.

BROTHERHOOD AND EQUALITY OF MANKIND

Islam teaches that the human family is one, that there is no superiority of white over black or black over white. Islam rejects radically all notions of racial prejudice and teaches that the only basis of distinction between human beings is their belief and individual moral qualities.

The concept of Islamic brotherhood has two primary dimensions; the relationship of Muslims to Muslims and the relationship of Muslims to non-Muslims. As for the first category, Islam teaches that the brotherhood between all Muslims is to be absolute and total and that the Arab has no privileges over the non-Arab.

As for the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, the teaching of Islam is that this is to be a relationship of mutual respect and particularly of tolerance. It is preferable that Muslims and non-Muslims live in peace, protect each other, and cooperate with one another. As the Koran says: "There is no compulsion in religion" Koran 2:256 and "To you your religion, and to me my religion." Koran 109:6

REASON
Muslims consider their religion to be very rational and consistent with the dictates of the believing and reasoning mind.

Furthermore, the Koran teaches that rational faculty is one of the greatest gifts of Allah to man, and encourages us to use and develop this faculty. Islam does not ask its followers to believe and then follow everything blindly and unquestioningly. The Koran says, for instance: "If you are in doubt of what We [(1)] have sent down to Our worshipper (Prophet Muhammad), produce a chapter comparable to it. Call upon your helpers, other than Allah, to assist you, if you are true." Koran 2:23

[(1)] *When pronouns are capitalized they refer to the Creator, Allah. Examples: You, He, Him, His and, Own while pronouns such as Our, Ours, Us and We denote His Greatness not plurality.*

Islam encourages reasoning, thought and personal opinion. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The differences of opinion among the learned of my followers are Allah's mercy." Islam has great respect for learning science and for man's exploration of the secrets of nature and of creation. In fact Allah challenges man on many occasions in the Koran to deepen his faith, knowledge, and wisdom from study and contemplation of the natural world, its harmony, symmetry, and beauty. For example: “(It is He) who created the seven heavens, one above the other. You cannot see any inconsistency in the creation of the Merciful. Then return your gaze once more and yet again, your gaze comes back to you dazzled, and tired.” Koran 67:3-4.

The individual capacities and unique abilities of people are the gift of Allah, to be developed, perfected, and used for the benefit of humanity. Islam does not try to crush the individuality of its believers, but rather to guide each believer to perfection and purify his own uniqueness.

This multiplicity of expressive and developed personalities enriches society and places it on a higher level, like the beauty of an intricate but unified arabesque.

ISLAMIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS WAR

In the eyes of some commentators on Islam in the West, Islam has been portrayed as a militant religion, a religion of blood, fire, and sword. We have already tried to draw attention to the fundamental concern of Islam for tolerance and religious freedom, and have also commented upon the emphasis Islam places on peace and cooperation among mankind. However, Islam is a practical religion, a religion which never ignores for a single moment the complexities and demands of the harsh realities and facts of life. Islam is fundamentally concerned with establishing societies in which the rights of freedom of belief, human rights, and protection of life, dignity, and property are secure from both internal and external threats.

Therefore, even as Islam teaches its followers to be merciful and inclined toward forgiveness and peace even in times of war, it never teaches them to turn the other cheek. The philosophy of "turning the other cheek" may be appropriate for private individuals and small day- to-day affairs, however, it spells social suicide if it is implemented by society as an absolute value.

Islam therefore stipulates principles that Muslims are to follow before, during, and after war. Peace is to be established on the basis of justice. Muslims are not to be aggressive or to violate treaties they have concluded with others, but war is to be waged in defense of the Muslim community and what it stands for. It is forbidden for Muslims to be the initiators of war or terrorist activities.

During war, killing of civilians and those who do no participate directly in the war is strictly forbidden. Prisoners are to be treated humanely. Destruction of lands, fruit trees, animals, and towns and villages are also forbidden where avoidable. Muslims are to incline to peace if the enemy is truthfully inclined to peace, and make treaties and agreements to preserve

that peace and then observe those treaties as long as the enemy observes them. The concept of "jihad" is one of the highest concepts in Islam. The term has at times been translated as "Holy War". However, this translation is incomplete for jihad also means by language "struggling." It is a concept that places great emphasis on the struggle of oneself with the temptations of satan; to do good and sacrifice.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, that the greatest jihad is the striving of the Muslim to purify himself.

Jihad consists of all the striving the Muslim does in his external life, charity, righteous living and acts, the constant effort to achieve the Right Path in his dealings with his fellow men. This is true striving in the Way of Allah.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Islam sets down five principle duties that are obligatory upon all Muslims, and form the structure, or pillars, of his/her life.
They are:

1. Belief in the Oneness of Allah, and the bearing of witness to this belief with the words: "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Prophet and Messenger."

2. The five daily prayers at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and nightfall. These five daily prayers help one to develop Allah consciousness in his/her everyday life. The importance of these cannot be over emphasized. They are a constant reminder to the worshipper of the Presence and Power of Allah and help the worshipper to keep his/herself from deviating from the Right Path.

3. The bestowal of charity on one's fellow man. Islam places great emphasis on generosity and charity as a means of purifying one's soul and drawing closer to Allah. The Muslim is enjoined to give voluntarily whenever he/she can; however, he/she is required each lunar year to pay an obligatory charity tax of 2 ½% of his/her annual savings. This obligatory charity is then given to orphans, the needy and the poor. The Zakat, which means obligatory charity, enables the Muslim community to take care of all its members and insures that no one will be deprived of his/her basic human right to exist.

4. Fasting during the ninth month of the lunar year called "Ramadan." This fast is enjoined upon Muslims of good health and sound body who have attained the age of physical maturity and are not prevented from performing the fast by various circumstances like travel, sickness, mental illness, or specifically in the case of women, menstruation, or childbirth. The fast of Ramadan begins at dawn and lasts until sunset. During this period the Muslim abstains from eating, and drinking, sexual activity and smoking. Fasting teaches self-discipline and control, while purifying the soul and body and strengthening one's consciousness of Allah.

5. The pilgrimage to Mecca. The pilgrimage is required of all Muslims at least once during their lifetime, if they have the financial means. The annual pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the greatest events of the Muslim world, uniting Muslims from every race and from every corner of the world. This is a great experience in the life of a Muslim that enables him/her to draw closer to Allah. The greatest blessings of going on pilgrimage is that all one's previous sins are wiped away and the pilgrimage returns as pure as the day he/she was born. We would like to remind the reader that the Holy Mosque in Mecca was built by Prophet Abraham ﷺ and his son, Prophet Ishmael ﷺ.

WHO IS A MUSLIM?
Since there is no priesthood in Islam, no clergy and no official religious institution, all one has to do to become a Muslim is to be personally convinced of the truth of the teachings of Islam and bear witness that "There is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Prophet."

One of the great beauties of Islam is its simplicity, naturalness, and lack of formalities. Islam is the religion of Adam and of mankind in its earliest and most advanced stages of development. Allah says in the Holy Koran: "Therefore set your face to the religion purely, the upright creation upon which He originated people. There is no changing of the creation of Allah. This is the valuable religion, although most people do not know." Koran 30:30.

A THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION
Allah asks you, "Did you think that We had created you only for play, and that you would never be returned to Us? Koran 23:115. Have you ever stopped and asked yourself what is this life all about, what is the purpose of

being here, the purpose of your creation? The correct answer to this question is that you seek the truth, worship Allah alone, do good deeds for which there is the greatest reward, the reward of living eternally in Paradise.

THE BENEFIT OF EMBRACING ISLAM

Among the many benefits of embracing Islam are that once you bear witness that: "There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet," all your past sins are forgiven and are transformed into merits with an enormous reward awaiting you in Paradise! In addition, you receive the reward of believing the religion of the Prophet Jesus, if you are a Christian, or Prophet Moses, if you are a Jew, and the religion of Prophet Muhammad, which means that you receive two huge rewards, and you know that Allah loves you because He guided you to Him.

Al Hamdulillah this brings to a close the end of the inspirational booklet "What is Islam'

Footnote:

In 1975 an Islamic International Conference was held in Paris. Dr. Abdul Haleem Mahmood, the Shaykh of Azhar of Egypt successfully arranged for several thousands of this little book "What is Islam" to be printed and distributed at the conference. Incidentally, "What is Islam" has been translated into Italian, Urdu, Spanish and German,

Al Hamdulillah, we heard a heart-warming report about the little book's success in Germany. Fatima Herren of the Munich Islamic Center in German translated "What is Islam" into German and arranged for its distribution nationwide. When we were in UK an Egyptian friend had a copy of an Egyptian newspaper and drew Shaykh Ahmad's attention to an article that told the story of a German priest in Berlin who had embraced Islam.

The newspaper narrated the story of how that priest had gone to a university to preach Christianity to Muslim students. While he was there, he heard a cassette of the recitation of the Koran and inquired about it. A student told him it was the Koran and gave him a copy of "Was ist Islam". Al Hamdulillah, not long after the priest converted to Islam and opened his house to German converts!

We would really like to have this little book translated into Chinese so we could distribute it amongst our Chinese neighbors. They have rights in Islam and we fail miserably if we do not tell them about Islam and present it to them with respect. InshaAllah, the translation of this little book into Chinese will happen, can you help?

Lifespan conclusion

Prophet Muhammad, praise and peace be upon him, said, “Whosoever sees me in a dream has indeed seen me, because Satan cannot emulate me.”

As for my husband Shaykh Ahmad Darwish’s journey to Allah and His Prophet, praise and peace be upon him, it too started when he was young when he had a spiritual dream in which Prophet Muhammad, praise and peace be upon him, came to him smiling and gave him his little finger to suck.

Later when my husband wrote his first Islamic booklets “How to recite Al Koran” and the bibliographic guide “The Selected Islamic Reference Library”, he saw Lady Ayesha who spoke to him from the Prophet’s tomb saying ‘Welcome, Ahmad son of Darwish’.

It took us over 30 years to realize these visions with our blessed production that you are enjoying today. Al Hamdulillah.

In the 1980’s the Darwish family started their production of authentic Islamic material in Cairo, and continued thereafter in Dubai, London, and also in Muhammad Ali, the boxer’s villa near the University of Chicago, USA. As they traveled for 28 years throughout the USA they continued to produce their Islamic material and are currently continuing their work with the same dedication in the most civilized lands of Islam, Malaysia and Indonesia.

While the Darwish’s were in Chicago, Muhammad Ali invited Shaykh Ahmad’s teacher the Grand Muhaddith of Morocco, Habib Abdullah

As-Siddiq Al Ghumari who was a direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad, praise and peace be upon him, to Chicago and was captivated by his humble, spiritual demeanor. In an interview given to the French newspaper “Figaro” Muhammad Ali expressed his love for Habib Abdullah and said he wished he had a spirit such as his. When the Habib returned to Tangier, he was inundated by French reporters who came to discover this great spiritual person.

The Darwish family are not just regular spare time writers. They feel that it is through Habib Abdullah’s supplication that they have been blessed to produce a complete bookshelf of over 350 titles and growing in the languages of Arabic, English, Malay and Indonesian - some of which are encyclopedic in size - with very little hired help, and published by themselves. Al Hamdulillah, their production and dedication to their work is highly acclaimed.

A few centuries ago, Malaysia and Indonesia were blessed by the presence of many scholars some of which were Habibs that greatly influenced their civilization. Amongst such Habibs were the children of Imam Abdullah bin Alawi Al Haddad. These scholars led the way to freedom from the UK and Holland and built an overwhelming number of free private Islamic schools (pondoks) for girls and boys. For example, the students of the late Habib Syed Muhammad Alawi Al Maliki Al Hasani, the Muhaddith of Mecca, established over 300 schools in Java, Indonesia, some of which are free in keeping with his spirit, whereas others are not.

Both Habib Muhammad Alawi Maliki and Shaykh Darwish were blessed to share the same elite teachers, namely Habib Hafiz Abdullah bin As-Siddiq Al Ghumari and Shaykh Muhammad Al Fateh.

In more recent years Shaykh Hasanayn Makhluff, a descendant of Caliph Omar and the three times Mufti of Egypt explained the words of the Koran and revived the books of Imam Abdullah bin Alawi Al Haddad.

In this era there are only a few middle-eastern shaykhs who have made an impact on Islamic education. Among those scholarly shaykhs was the late Imam Sharawi of Egypt who wrote the highly acclaimed explanation of the Koran and was also responsible for

building a large residency complex to house students from Malaysia and Indonesia studying in Azhar.

Those who made a scholarly impact in the science of the Jurisprudence of Imam Shafi'i are Shaykh Qaradawi and Shaykh Wahbah Zuhaili both of whom received the prized Hijra award from the Sultan of Malaysia.

As for the science of Hadith, Shaykh Ahmad Darwish renewed the entire science and is the founder of Muhammad.com and Mosque.com. He protected the Name of Allah from being misused through attaining the domain name of Allah.com.

Shaykh Ahmad Darwish was the student and scribe of Shaykh Hasanayn Makhluff, Shaykh Sharawi and the acclaimed grand Muhaddith of this era, Hafiz Habib Abdullah bin As-Siddiq Al Ghumari, a descendant of Al Hasan, may Allah be pleased with them.

It is by the blessing of Allah, that Shaykh Ahmad Darwish has accomplished the tremendous, or perhaps one should say, the breath-taking work of compiling all the authentic Hadith of the Prophet, praise and peace be upon him, into a single reference and by doing so he has brought the science of Hadith to its finale. It can be said that Shaykh Ahmad Darwish is the modern day secretary of all the scholars of Hadith throughout the fifteen centuries of Islam and has finalized the Hadith agendas of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Imam Shafi'i and Hafiz Suyuti.

It is through the brilliant masterpiece of his workmanship that the time span between you, the Prophet and his Companions is attainable through the renewal and simplification of the entire Islamic educational system. This system has been developed with a concise approach that bridges the gap between layman and Ph.D. and eliminates the need to search any further.

THE KORAN: Shaykh Darwish and his English wife bring to us the translation of the meaning of the Holy Koran.

1. As you might know, there have been over 40 attempts to translate the meaning of the Koran none of which are by two people carrying the mother tongues of Arabic and English. Al Hamdulillah, we were

humbled when the manager of Muhammad Ali's grandson said that when he read our translation of the meaning that the Koran is no longer guess work. Shaykh Darwish has produced a word-for-word dictionary of the entire text of the Koran in Arabic, English, Indonesian, Malay, and Chinese.

2. In another edition he assists its understanding with approximately 2000 subtitles.

3. He also brings to us the explanation of Koran by the Prophet, praise and peace be upon him, through the Prophet's authentic Hadith with its commentary by Tabari the Shaykh of Tafseer, and the Tafseer of the renowned contemporary commentator on the Koran Shaykh Sharawi of whom the late President Sadat ordered the Egyptian TV to record all his explanatory lectures so that they might be preserved for future generations. Included in this work is the explanation of the Ghumari scholars of Hadith and spirituality by ibn Ajeebah. This explanation of the Koran also contains over 1337 authentic Prophetic Sayings, 900 Features, 830 Interpretation and over 1700 subtitles and is very easy to learn, comprehend and practice.

4. Shaykh Darwish, as previously mentioned has also produced a unique Arabic dictionary of the Koran that reduces study time to a tenth of the time of the legacy status quo. Incidentally, when we counted the Arabic words of Koran, the total number amounted to 67267 words and from that total he removed the repeated words and produced a dictionary that contains 18560 words. If you study the first 1000 words in his dictionary you will be able to recognize 60% of the pages of the Koran.

5. Sister Siti Nadriyah of Surabaya, Indonesia is currently translating the meaning of the Koran together with our other productions into the Indonesian language.

HADITH: PROPHETIC SAYINGS:

1. As we mentioned earlier Shaykh Darwish extracted over 34000 authentic Hadith of the Prophet, praise and peace be upon him, from 1850 references – amongst which are the renowned 6 and 9 famous books and of course Bukhari and Muslim. On account of his great achievement, the Hadith are no longer scattered but presented as a single reference.

2. Among the features of his Hadith work is that Shaykh Darwish organized the Hadith alphabetically.

3. He also classified these Hadith into 2500 subjects, one subject at a time in a simple, handy manual and eliminated the false statements attributed to the Prophet, praise and peace be upon him. Through this accomplishment it is as if the reader were sitting directly before the hands of the Prophet, praise and peace be upon him, and learning directly from him.
4. In conjunction with Shaykh Darwish's collection of Hadith he produced the first Arabic Dictionary of Hadith. This dictionary is the first of its kind and lists over 48000 words used by the Prophet, praise and peace be upon him.
Shaykh Darwish's 2500 subjects commencing with:
THE HADITH MANUAL OF FAITH (1300 hadith);
THE HADITH MANUAL OF ISLAMIC MANNERS (ethics and behavior);
THE HADITH MANUAL OF SUPPLICATIONS (for each stage of one's life).
5. He has also produced the largest reference of fabricated Hadith with a list of all their fabricators.
6. His HADITH DATA WAREHOUSE APPLIANCE is available for governmental and departmental use.

SERAH/PROPHET'S LIFE:
After removing the unauthenticated statements from the two best ever written books of Serah, namely those of Supreme Justice Eyad and Supreme Justice Nabahani, Shaykh Darwish enhanced these great works by adding auxiliary subtitles and produced a chronological prophetic calendar. No one can claim they know the Prophet, praise and peace be upon him, without having studied this elite book.

FIQH/JURISPRUDENCE:
1. Shaykh Darwish has been blessed to produce a chart of over 4000 Koran verses and hadith as well as the quotations of the Companions mentioned in Imam Shafi'is book "The Mother of Knowledge" (Al Umm).
2. Having accomplished that, he produced in a simplified fashion, 1000 jurisprudence Questions and Answers (Q&A) together with their proofs from the Koran and Hadith (Daleels) in subjects with a full cross reference index.

3. In addition he has added 88 years of jurist decisions (fatwas) judged by the leading Muftis in Azhar, Egypt, as well as all major Fiqh references in his FIQH/JURISPRUDENCE APPLIANCE for governmental and departmental use.

AQIDAH/FAITH:

Faith adhered to by Imam Shafi'i and the ulama (scholars) of the four schools of Ahle Sunnat Wa Jamat is explained in Shaykh Darwish's 24 hours DVD. This DVD politely, yet compellingly confronts the hate ideology of the Shi'ite of Safawi – Khomini, and the Khawarij of the past and their modern day Wahabi offshoot with its IDOLology attributes, money and fame marketing Salafia missionaries which produce fanatics and terrorists.

TARIQAH/IHSAN/SPIRITUAL PATH:

1. Shaykh Darwish introduces the daily readings (Ratib) of the Prophet, praise and peace be upon him, which should not be read second to any other ratib.
2. He has also produced the first authentic celebration of the birthday anniversary of the Prophet (Maulid), praise and peace be upon him, and eliminated the false reports inserted into the readings that are in current circulation. His authentic readings list 37 proofs that the celebration is DESIREABLE/MUSTAHAB and not a forbidden innovation (bidda).

LESAN AL ARAB:

Shaykh Darwish has replaced the famous classical dictionary called "Lesan al Arab" (The Tongue of the Arab) by the "Lesan of the Prophet Dictionary" as well as a complete dictionary of the words of Koran.

Finally, he is very grateful for companies such as Amazon and Iphone etc. who make the dispersal of such knowledge easy.

Shaykh Darwish was in Silicon Valley with Linus the founder of Linux when Amazon had just started with a mailing list and Shaykh Darwish was busy Arabizing the Linux Operating System.

Among our English translations and authorships are:

The Translation and Meaning of the Holy Koran

Imam Nawawi’s Garden’s of Righteousness
As Shefa – The Cure by Qadi Eyad (Seerah)
168 Children’s stories and poems
Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Describes himself (40 hadith)
Heraclius Emperor of Rome Confessed & Supported Prophet Muhammad ﷺ
We Want a Christmas Tree!
Al Ghazali’s work (several books)
The Jews of Medina
The Articles of the Sunni Islamic Faith
The Journey of the Lifetime with Prophet Muhammad (Seerah)
The Rare Sermons of Prophet Jesus
What is Hadith Terminology
Bukhari (in progress)
Imam Malik’s Muwatta (in progress)
Tafseer of the Koran (in progress)
What is Islam?